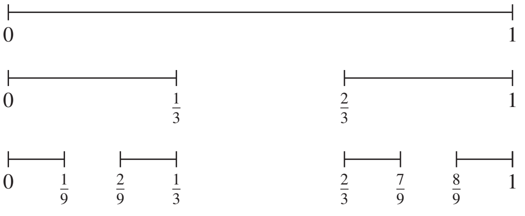
P.S. Problem Solving

1. Cantor Set The **Cantor set** (Georg Cantor, 1845–1918) is a subset of the unit interval $[0, 1]$. To construct the Cantor set, first remove the middle third $\left(\frac{1}{3}, \frac{2}{3}\right)$ of the interval, leaving two line segments. For the second step, remove the middle third of each of the two remaining segments, leaving four line segments. Continue this procedure indefinitely, as shown in the figure. The Cantor set consists of all numbers in the unit interval $[0, 1]$ that still remain.



(a) Find the total length of all the line segments that are removed.

(b) Write down three numbers that are in the Cantor set.

(c) Let C_n denote the total length of the remaining line segments after n steps. Find $\lim_{n\to\infty} C_n$.

2. Using Sequences

(a) Given that $\lim_{x\to\infty} a_{2n} = L$ and $\lim_{x\to\infty} a_{2n+1} = L$, show that $\{a_n\}$ is convergent and $\lim_{x\to\infty} a_n = L$.

(b) Let $a_1 = 1$ and $a_{n+1} = 1 + \dfrac{1}{1 + a_n}$. Write out the first eight terms of $\{a_n\}$. Use part (a) to show that $\lim_{x\to\infty} a_n = \sqrt{2}$. This gives the **continued fraction expansion**

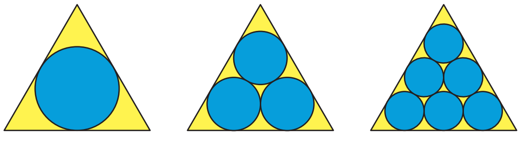
$$\sqrt{2} = 1 + \cfrac{1}{2 + \cfrac{1}{2 + \cdots}}.$$

3. Using a Series It can be shown that

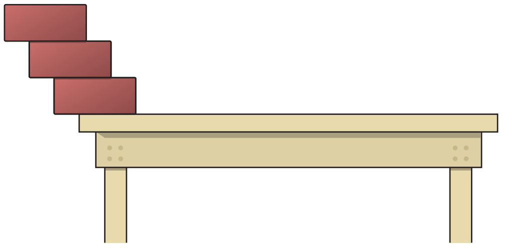
$$\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n^2} = \frac{\pi^2}{6} \text{ [see Section 9.3, page 608].}$$

Use this fact to show that $\displaystyle\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{(2n-1)^2} = \frac{\pi^2}{8}$.

4. Finding a Limit Let T be an equilateral triangle with sides of length 1. Let a_n be the number of circles that can be packed tightly in n rows inside the triangle. For example, $a_1 = 1$, $a_2 = 3$, and $a_3 = 6$, as shown in the figure. Let A_n be the combined area of the a_n circles. Find $\lim_{n\to\infty} A_n$.



5. Using Center of Gravity Identical blocks of unit length are stacked on top of each other at the edge of a table. The center of gravity of the top block must lie over the block below it, the center of gravity of the top two blocks must lie over the block below them, and so on (see figure).



(a) When there are three blocks, show that it is possible to stack them so that the left edge of the top block extends $\frac{11}{12}$ unit beyond the edge of the table.

(b) Is it possible to stack the blocks so that the right edge of the top block extends beyond the edge of the table?

(c) How far beyond the table can the blocks be stacked?

6. Using Power Series

(a) Consider the power series

$$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} a_n x^n = 1 + 2x + 3x^2 + x^3 + 2x^4 + 3x^5 + x^6 + \cdots$$

in which the coefficients $a_n = 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 1, \ldots$ are periodic of period $p = 3$. Find the radius of convergence and the sum of this power series.

(b) Consider a power series

$$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} a_n x^n$$

in which the coefficients are periodic, $(a_{n+p} = a_p)$, and $a_n > 0$. Find the radius of convergence and the sum of this power series.

7. Finding Sums of Series

(a) Find a power series for the function

$$f(x) = xe^x$$

centered at 0. Use this representation to find the sum of the infinite series

$$\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{n!(n+2)}.$$

(b) Differentiate the power series for $f(x) = xe^x$. Use the result to find the sum of the infinite series

$$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \frac{n+1}{n!}.$$